August 2008

COMPOSTING FACILITY

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 317

COMPOSTING FACILITY

A composting facility is installed for biological stabilization of waste organic material.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

The purpose of this practice is to biologically treat waste organic material and produce humus-like material that can be recycled as a soil amendment or organic fertilizer. The material may also be used by other acceptable methods of recycling that comply with laws, rules and regulations.

Composting is accomplished by mixing an energy source (carbonaceous) with a nutrient source (nitrogenous) in a prescribed manner to meet aerobic bacteria requirements. Correct proportions of ingredients are essential to minimize odors and avoid pest problems.

Waste material for composting may include livestock and poultry manure, dead animal carcasses, and food processing material when it is considered part of a normal farm operation.

This practice applies where: (1) waste organic material is generated by agriculture production or processing, (2) composting is needed to manage the waste organic material properly, and (3) an overall waste management system has been planned that accounts for the end use of the composted material. The three types of composting facilities covered in the Composting Facility standard are:

- **Aerated windrows**—Suited for large volumes of organic material managed by power equipment used to periodically turn the composting material.
- **Static piles**—Material is initially mixed into a homogeneous mixture that has the proper moisture content and bulk density to facilitate air movement throughout the pile without periodically turning the material. Forced air might be necessary to facilitate the composting process.
- **In-vessel**—An enclosed structure is used to contain a blended mixture of organic waste that is strictly controlled for optimum air and temperature. In-vessel composting also includes naturally aerated systems where organic materials are layered in a container and turned once during the composting process.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Composting Facility is commonly used in a Conservation Management System with practices

The attached diagram identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.

such as Waste Storage Facility (313), Nutrient Management (590), and Waste Utilization (633).

For further information, refer to the practice standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide and associated specifications and job sheets.

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Composting Facility

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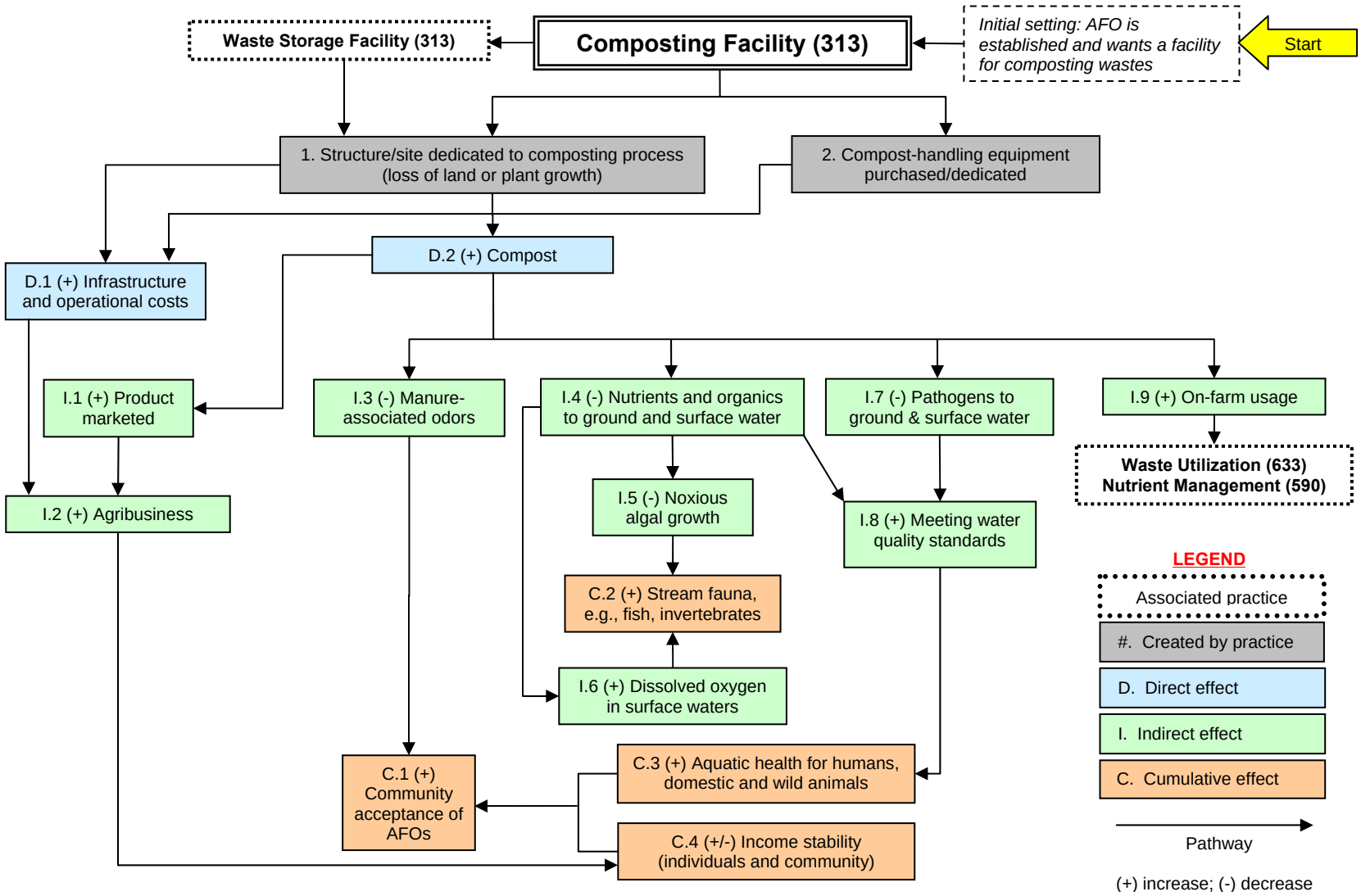

Note: Effects are qualified with a plus (+) or minus (-). These symbols indicate only an increase (+) or a decrease (-) in the effect upon the resource, not whether the effect is beneficial or adverse.

The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.